



**SAN JOSE DOWNTOWN
ASSOCIATION**

November 2, 2021

The Honorable Mayor Sam Liccardo and City Council
City of San José
200 East Santa Clara Street
San José, CA 95113

RE: City Council Agenda Item #3.3,
COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Community and Economic Recovery Budget Adjustments

Dear Mayor Liccardo and City Councilmembers,

The San Jose Downtown Association (SJDA) represents more than 1,800 businesses and property owners and as we are working on placemaking and clean and safe initiatives to help employees and customers return downtown, we have received feedback from members and visitors regarding their concerns for safety related to our unhoused population. Building off our current PBID services and expanded Groundwerx services, we strongly believe that we can facilitate the city's "Road Map" priority projects (referenced below: small business recovery, sheltering and enhanced encampment services, and beautify SJ) by leveraging ARPA funds that can help ameliorate these safety issues.

Upon our PBID renewal in July 2022, a new Social Impact Team that complements our renowned Groundwerx services will be created. This new program will address the unhoused concerns we face daily by working with key housing partners including non-profits, city, and county. However, due to the overwhelming feedback from our members, we believe this program cannot wait to be implemented until July 2022 when the new PBID district begins services. The Social Impact Team will be led by a Social Impact Manager who will have a background in social work (a Licensed Clinical Social Worker or similar credential and/or educational background). Team members will have experience working in case management, outreach, and/or lived experience with homelessness.

When hired, the Social Impact Team will also receive additional training around de-escalation tactics and crisis response. PBID staff are already working with service provider partners to help refine these training requirements and develop a coordination plan. ***Six months of funding would allow the Social Impact Manager to:***

- Create and bolster opportunities for building trust with our downtown unsheltered population, making the process of connecting an individual with needed social services increasing efficiency and efficacy
- Allow for increased support and coordination as the County begins to implement both assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) and the Community Mobile Response Pilot Program

- Foster increased peer-to-peer collaboration between SJDA, City and County staff and nonprofit social service providers
- Start connecting with our downtown unsheltered population to understand their needs prior to the implementation of the PBID's new 10-year management plan
- Allow Groundwerx to focus on the fundamentals: cleanliness, interacting with business and property owners, providing directions and guidance to downtowners and increase staff capacity to respond to customer concerns seven days a week

Anecdotally, in the last year Groundwerx has had more incidents of aggressive behavior associated with individuals with undiagnosed or untreated mental illness. These aggressive interactions have unfortunately resulted in attempted assaults on staff. While our public safety partners, and Groundwerx training, prevented these incidents from becoming life threatening, it has become clear that we need staff specialized in working with our most vulnerable population downtown.

We are kindly requesting \$150,000 of ARPA to fund this six month program that will be inherited into our PBID and fully-funded thereafter. We appreciate the consideration of prioritizing funds for our city and communities. *What our city can afford is to fund this program. What our community can't afford is to continue the status quo.*

Sincerely,



Scott Knies
Executive Director

cc:

Jennifer Maguire, City Manager, City of San José
Chris Burton, Deputy City Manager, City of San José
Kelly Kline, Director of Land Use and Economic Development
Nanci Klein, Director of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs, City of San José
Jacky Morales-Ferrand, Director of Housing, City of San José
Katia McClain, SJDA, Board President
Chris Freise, PBID, Board President

San José City Roadmap | FY 2021-2022

Legend: ■ COVID-19 Response ■ Enterprise Initiatives

Enterprise Priority	Project						Strategy		Policy
COVID-19 Pandemic: Community + Economic Recovery	Housing Stabilization	Re-Employment + Workforce Development	Small Business Recovery	Food + Necessities Distribution	Digital Equity	Child Care Learning Pods			Build Back Better + Recovery Taskforce
Emergency Management + Preparedness	Vaccination Taskforce								Soft Story Building Earthquake Retrofit Policy
Creating Housing + Preventing Homelessness	Emergency Housing Construction + Operation	Sheltering + Enhanced Encampment Services					North San José Strategy		Encampment Management + Safe Relocation Policy
Safe, Vibrant, + Inclusive Neighborhoods + Public Life	Police Reforms Work Plan	San José 311 + Service Delivery	Encampment Waste Pick-Up BeautifySJ	Vision Zero Traffic Safety			Equity Strategy Development	Neighborhood Services Access Strategy	
Building the San José of Tomorrow with a Downtown for Everyone	Align Zoning with General Plan	Development Services Transformation	Google Development	Major Real Estate Development Projects			BART + High-Speed Rail Strategy		
Smart, Sustainable, + Reliable City: 21st Century Infrastructure	Pavement, Fire, EOC, Transit Capital Improvements	Regional Wastewater Facility Capital Improvements	Electrical Service for Major Development	Climate Smart American Cities Climate Challenge			Lowering PG&E Above Market Costs for Clean Energy		
Enterprise Priority Foundational	Project						Strategy		Policy
Strategic Fiscal Positioning + Resource Deployment	Federal + State Recovery Advocacy	Secure City Cybersecurity	Procurement Improvement	Pension Obligation Bond Analysis			Budgeting for Equity	City Roadmap Budgeting, Accountability, + Performance	
Powered by People	Continuity of City Services	Safe Workplace	Employee Health + Wellness	Drive to Digital	Effective Teams		City Workforce Diversity + Skill Building		

Figure 1.0: City Roadmap 18 Recovery Initiatives